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DISCUSSION

NOTE ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF FIVE UPON THE TERMINOLOGY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

In the November number of this magazine, in my paper in the "Symposium on Grammatical Nomenclature," I expressed the opinion that our committee should go ahead and present a report at the St. Louis meeting of the Department of Superintendence. I ought to explain that those words were written last March. At that time I supposed that the National Education Association would make an appropriation for the use of its committee, to the end that we might meet and transact the business necessary to the carrying-out of our commission. No such appropriation was forthcoming, and our committee has not had a meeting.

Furthermore, when I wrote the paper referred to, I did not know that our committee would be joined with committees from the Modern Language Association and the American Philological Association. The work has taken on a much wider scope than was thought of when the article was written. Under the circumstances, I recognize, as readily as anyone, the impossibility of making a report in February, 1912.

I should like to take this opportunity to say that our committee will be glad to have suggestions from all who are interested in our task—and that should include all teachers of English. We shall welcome suggestions, either on specific matters of terminology, or on general aspects of our work. All we ask is that our correspondents will be careful not to convince themselves so thoroughly of any position that it will be impossible to dislodge them. It is inconceivable that the report of the committee will be entirely satisfactory to any one person. The question for each teacher to ask himself is this: Is not the great good that will come from uniformity worth more than the satisfaction that would come to me from having my own way?

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NOTE ON THE WORK OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN ON GRAMMATICAL TERMINOLOGY

Since it is hoped that the movement toward a reform in grammatical terminology will command general interest and support, I should like to retrace its history rapidly, describe its present status, and indicate how the literature upon the subject, foreign and American, may be obtained.

The movement appears to have arisen in the same year, 1906, in France and America. The French committee of fifteen appointed for the simpli-

fication of grammatical terminology, though it included a professor of English and a professor of German, was evidently intended to deal with the grammar of the mother-tongue (French) alone; and it has confined itself to this work. The Modern Language Association of America, at its annual meeting in December, 1906 (I wish again to call attention to the correction of the date 1908 given in my paper in the June number of the *School Review*), appointed a committee of fifteen to deal with the grammatical terminology of the modern languages. The phrase "modern languages" as used in our American schools generally means "modern *foreign* languages"; but it of course had no such meaning in the action of the Modern Language Association. The committee was to deal with English, French, German, etc. The action of this association in 1906 was thus not only the first movement looking toward a reform of terminology in *our* mother-tongue, but the first one looking toward the harmonizing of the nomenclature of several languages. Unhappily, as I explained in my earlier article, another task which was put upon the committee occupied its time for four years, and made us, therefore, not the first but the third nation to start upon work from the larger point of view.¹ An English joint committee upon grammatical terminology was appointed in 1908. This was to cover the field for English, German, French, Latin, and Greek. It proceeded at once to its work, and made a preliminary report in 1909, and a finished one in 1910. At the annual meeting of the modern language men of Germany in May, 1910, Director Dörr, who presented a paper on the simplification of grammatical terminology, was empowered to form a committee, which should hold correspondence with the French and English committees and with local German committees that might be formed, for the study of terminology in German, English, French, and Italian grammar. In December of the same year, 1910, at the meeting of the Modern Language Association of America in New York, its committee of fifteen upon grammatical nomenclature reported upon the other task which had been assigned to it. I then gave a paper of which I have already spoken (covering the same general ground with a paper which I had presented in 1909 before the American Philological Association, and, in the same year, before the American Association for the Advancement of Science). I had two purposes. One was to point out the bad effect of the existing variety of terminology in the grammars of each of the languages

¹ The vote passed, December 28, 1906, was as follows:

"That a committee, consisting of fifteen representatives, three each for English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, be appointed by the executive committee of the association.

"That such a committee devise a uniform system of grammatical terminology—or as nearly uniform a system for each language, or group of languages, as can be contrived—and report to the association at its next meeting, or as soon as practicable thereafter."

The mover, Professor R. A. Loiseaux, of Columbia University, was appointed chairman. It was certainly undeserved that he should have had to carry the committee through the four years of work upon a different task, only to find himself unable to give further time when that task had been disposed of.

studied in our schools, and the contradictions resulting as a student passed from one grammar to another in the same language, or from the grammar of one language to the grammar of another. The other purpose was to urge a life-long contention that not only do the Englishman, the German, the Frenchman, the Italian, the Spaniard, the Roman, and the Greek possess the same grammatical *ideas*, but that, to a very considerable degree, they express them by *ways* which are identical—the state of things being wholly natural, since these languages all come from the same parent speech. This, which to my mind is the most illuminating and, pedagogically, the most important, most interesting, and most helpful aspect of the whole matter, and which ought therefore to be put at the very front of any report upon the terminology of these languages, is not brought out in the report of the English joint committee. After the adjournment of the Modern Language Association, the now freed committee of fifteen was expected to go on with its original work, and I was put into a vacant place upon it, and, a little later, made its chairman. In the February following this meeting, the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association, in consequence of an entirely independent movement originated by Mr. Rounds, established a committee of five for the study of the terminology of English grammar. This committee, as afterward appointed by President W. M. Davidson of the Department of Superintendence, consisted of Mr. Rounds, *chairman*, Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, superintendent of schools in Chicago, Mr. Stratton D. Brooks, superintendent of schools in Boston, Mr. H. S. West, assistant superintendent of schools in Baltimore, and myself.

There were thus in existence two independent and unrelated committees for the study of the terminology of English grammar, one of the two being charged also with the duty of dealing with the terminology of the other modern languages studied in our schools. This seemed an unsatisfactory state of affairs. It would have been unfortunate if two different sets of recommendations had finally appeared; it would have been unfortunate if the terminology of English grammar had been studied without reference to the other linguistic work of many of the same students; and it was clearly desirable that whatever light the discussion might present for the common subject, English, should be shared by all who were at work upon the problems. Moreover, no provision had been made for the terminology of Latin and Greek grammar; so that whatever gains might prove to be made for the teaching of the other languages in our schools would run the risk of being broken in upon by the teaching of a different terminology, or different terminologies, for these two languages. A motion was accordingly made by Professor Kelsey at the meeting of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, and by others later at meetings of other associations, petitioning the Modern Language Association, the National Education Association, and the American Philological Association to appoint a joint committee upon the matter, made up from these three bodies. On motion of Mrs. Young, the National Education Association, at its meeting in

July, acted affirmatively. The way for joint action had been paved for the American Philological Association by a motion of my own at the December meeting preceding, empowering the Executive Committee to appoint representatives of the association, upon any request for co-operation.

The president of the American Philological Association, Professor J. C. Rolfe, appointed representatives of that association when the request reached him in the summer. The absence of President Lewis F. Mott from the country prevented the appointing of representatives of the Modern Language Association till October. In November, President C. G. Pearce named as representatives of the National Education Association the same five that had been named by the Department of Superintendence. The problem of the representation from the other two bodies had proved much more difficult. Seven languages were to be represented. The action of President Pearce had been counted on as probable. With three representatives of the Department of Superintendence already very properly upon the committee, there were twelve places left for representatives of seven languages. That meant not more than two representatives for any one language. It was desirable that one of the two representatives in each case should be from a school, and the other from a university. It was also desirable to secure as wide a representation of the different parts of the country as possible. The members from the Modern Language Association would naturally be taken from its existing committee of fifteen, which, in the spring, had begun a preliminary correspondence looking toward active work. Since there was already one Latin man upon the committee of the National Education Association, the American Philological Association could appoint but three classical men, and, for the other two members, must appoint representatives of English, French, German, Italian, or Spanish who, naturally being members of the Modern Language Association, were also members of its own body. The number of such members of both associations was small.¹ In spite of these narrow limitations, very nearly everything that could be desired proved to be possible to get, including a wide geographical representation, and, as it seems to me, an excellent choice of men. The committee as made up consisted of the following members:

For the Department of Superintendence: Mrs. Young of Chicago, Mr. Brooks of Boston, and Mr. West of Baltimore.

For English: C. R. Rounds, now of the West Division High School, Milwaukee, and J. W. Cunliffe, of the University of Wisconsin.

For German: Edward Spanhoofd, St. Paul's School, Concord, N.H., and Hermann Collitz, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.

For French, Spanish, and Italian: W. B. Snow, head of the department of modern languages, English High School, Boston, Mass, B. L. Bowen, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, E. C. Hills, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colo., and E. H. Wilkins, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

¹ This general condition of things seems cause for regret. The case is still worse if one looks at all three bodies. I found only my own name down in the three lists.

For Latin: John C. Kirtland, Phillips Exeter Academy, and W. G. Hale, University of Chicago.

For Greek: Sidney G. Stacey, Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn N.Y., and Walter Miller, Tulane University, New Orleans.

Professor Miller has since accepted a professorship of Latin in the University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., and, in consequence of the appearance of uneven balance in the committee, offered his resignation. But the president of the American Philological Association declined to accept the resignation, on the ground that Mr. Miller was all the better equipped for service through working in two languages.

Mr. West and Professor Cunliffe have recently resigned from the committee, and Professor A. F. Lange of the department of education, the University of California, and Professor F. G. Hubbard, of the department of English, the University of Wisconsin, have been appointed in their places.

The chairmen of the representatives of the three associations are Mr. Rounds for the appointees of the National Education Association, Mr. Kirtland for those of the American Philological Association, and myself, in virtue of my chairmanship of the original committee of fifteen of the Modern Language Association, for the five representatives from the committee of the latter. But it does not appear likely that the representatives of the three bodies, or the original fifteen of the Modern Language Association, will take any action separately, since the idea of co-operation lies at the very bottom of the work assigned. The chairman of the joint committee, I have within a few days been informed, is to be myself.

I repeat, for this joint committee, Mr. Rounds' invitation. We should be glad to have suggestions, from individuals, or from any local associations that may discuss the matter, with regard to whatever can bear upon our task, for English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, or Greek. These communications may be addressed at any time to the chairman, or to any member. The first meeting of the committee takes place December 30, 1911, in Chicago.

It is almost as hard to change an article of grammatical faith as an article of theological faith; and the same is true of the formulae in which these articles of faith are expressed. But the present condition of things is wasteful of time to the student, and intellectually intolerable. The first step toward betterment will lie, not in an arbitrary selection of any kind, but in a patient and dispassionate study of the phenomena. The beautiful and noble science of human expression—for that is what grammar is, in spite of its general low estate in public opinion—is based, or should be based, upon facts as definite as those which guide the observer in any of the natural sciences; namely, the facts of recorded utterance. We shall attain final intellectual satisfaction and final sound pedagogy only through results which are in accordance with these facts. But we may not be able to agree at once, and it may conceivably not seem best in every case to advise an immediate adoption of that which would be ideal; though I am personally a strong believer in the general acceptability of truth. We need, therefore, to try first, with open minds, to study the

problems, and then, as Mr. Rounds has said, to make some sacrifice of our individual conclusions, if needs be, in the cause of a great common good. First, inquiry; then, if necessary, compromise!

There are already demands for an ultimate international conference upon terminology, after the various national committees have reported. We of America shall best command influence at this final stage, not by seeking today to find agreements with one or both of the committees which have reported (the English committee has already made this mistake), but by presenting a report so grounded in reality that it will stand the test of the most searching discussion.¹

For the convenience of those who may like to read what has been published on the subject, I add the following information:

The English *Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology*, published in 1910, may be had from Miss G. M. Cooksey, 10 Radnor Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, England, at the rate of 3*d.* each. The report in its final form has recently been issued by John Murray, Albemarle St., London, under the title "On Grammatical Terminology," price sixpence. A privately printed criticism of the report by Professor E. V. Arnold, of the University College of North Wales, was sent to all members of the English Classical Association before its meeting in January last. The discussion (by a large

¹ At the cost of some repetition, I must make this very important principle of procedure clear. The French use "*attribut*" for the adjective in what we call the "predicate," and "*épithète*" where we say "attributive." For the sake of harmony, the English committee recommends giving up "attributive" and saying "epithet adjective" instead. This compliance still leaves a contradiction, since we are to say "predicate adjective," while the French are to say "attribut." But the worse evil lies in the fact that the word which has been adopted for English was already bad for this purpose in French, and is equally bad in English—having in both languages a special acquired meaning, which has conquered the primitive one. Harmony founded upon the adoption of a bad precedent is not good. The English Committee has not helped the cause of final agreement by following the French example, but has hindered it. Here, by new action, are already *two* reports on the wrong side, to be overcome, where before there was but one.

The real remedy lay in going to the root of the matter. "Attributive" and "*attribut*" are both bad words, for the purpose to which they have been put, and that is what has made it possible that they should come into exactly opposite uses in French and English. Most adjectives (thus "good") express attributes, no matter how they are joined to their nouns; and "expressing an attribute" is the only proper meaning of "attributive." The word thus indicates *the nature of the part of speech* employed, and not the *way* in which that part of speech is employed.

An adjective may be used in three ways: (1) in close attachment to a noun, (2) in loose attachment to a noun, and (3) as a part of the predicate. For (2) the name appositive should be used, and is used in some grammars; for (3) the name "predicate" or "predicative" should be used, as in most grammars. For (1) a new name, simple and intelligible, but really expressing the function, is wanted. I have proposed "adherent adjective." Thus "the happy and careless boy paid no attention" (adherent adjective), "the boy, happy and careless, paid no attention" (appositive adjective), and "the boy was happy and careless" (predicate adjective).

For the noun, only the second and third ways of attachment to a noun or pronoun are possible, for the true participle without adjectival effect, only the second.

number of speakers) which took place at this meeting is recorded in the *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, Vol. VIII, published by John Murray, price two shillings sixpence.

The French documents may be obtained through any book firm in this country having affiliations in Europe, or any Paris book firm. They are as follows: *Rapport présenté au conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique au nom de la commission chargée d'étudier la simplification des nomenclatures grammaticales*, signed by Maquet, published by Belin Frères (adopted in 1907, but apparently printed early in 1908), *Deuxième rapport de la commission chargée de la simplification des nomenclatures grammaticales*, signed by Brunot and Maquet (undated, but published in 1909 by Belin Frères), and the government document, "Circulaire ministérielle du 28 septembre, 1910" entitled *La nouvelle nomenclature grammaticale* (Imprimerie Lahure, rue de Fleurus, 9).

The information given above about the German committee is contained in the *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der XIV. Tagung des allgemeinen deutschen Neuphilologenverbandes in Zürich*, May, 1910, published by Carl Meyer in Hanover, 1911. The *Bericht* gives also, briefly, a discussion of the general matter by a number of German professors, and by Girot, a member of the French commission who was present at the meeting in Zürich. The *Bericht* for the meeting of 1911 is not yet published, but is not likely to contain any considerable discussion of the subject, since the report was expected to require two years in preparation.

On the American side, the published papers are the following: M. Félix Weill's discussion of the French reports of 1907 and 1909, in the *Bulletin officiel de la société nationale des professeurs français en Amérique* (No. 17), May, 1910, which may be had for twenty cents by addressing the treasurer of the Society at 100 S. Nicholas Avenue, New York City, approving comments on the intended work of the English committee, especially one by John C. Kirtland, *Classical Weekly*, May 22, 1909 (Mr. Kirtland has advocated the cause at meetings of several associations), Mr. Rounds' "The Varying Systems of Nomenclature in Use in our Texts in English Grammar," *Educational Review*, June, 1910, my "Conflicting Terminology for Identical Conceptions in the Grammars of Indo-European Languages," given before the American Philological Association in December, 1909, and printed in Vol. XL of the *Proceedings*, my "The Harmonizing of Grammatical Nomenclature, with Especial Reference to Mood-Syntax," given before the Modern Language Association of America in December, 1910, and printed (Part I: to be concluded) in the *Publications*, Vol. XXVI, 2, my "The Harmonizing of Grammatical Nomenclature in High-School Study," given before the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club in April, 1910, and printed in the *School Review*, June, 1911, and the Symposium following this last paper, contributed by Professors Rounds, Meader, Kuersteiner, Wagner, Scott, Diekhoff, and myself, printed in the *School Review* for November, 1911.

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